

in March 1931, but at the last moment new difficulties arose and negotiations broke down.

On February 2, 1932, the Disarmament Conference, attended by sixty-one states, opened at Geneva, with Henderson in the chair. Looking back on its failure we may regret that none of the Great Powers took a strong line at the start. The success of the Washington Naval Conference had been largely due to the leadership of Mr. Hughes, who produced his scheme on the opening day and identified it with the prestige of the United States. He was, of course, the host, and at Geneva there could be no host. It is none the less deplorable that the British Delegation failed to give a firmer lead, and that some of its concessions were held back till enthusiasm had waned and the broad principle of reduction had been smothered beneath the arguments of experts. During the first six months the two Great Powers who appeared most anxious for results were Italy, who announced her readiness to accept any limitation acceptable to the rest, and the United States, whose President unsuccessfully proposed a clean cut of a third over the whole field.

When the Conference adjourned in the summer of 1932 the psychological moment had passed. Germany was rapidly recovering her strength, and could no longer be controlled or ignored. Exasperated by the fruitless talk at Geneva she withdrew her Delegation, but was wooed back at the end of the year by a formula recognising her Equality of status in the matter of armaments in a system of general security*. The session of 1933 was as barren as that of 1932, and in the autumn Hitler, who had become Chancellor on January 30, flung out of the Conference and resigned from the League.

Failure had been partially due to the undeniable technical difficulties arising out of the claims of states with different problems to face. The deeper reason was the terror (felt not only by the expert but by the man in the street) of embarking on uncharted seas, the fear of each that others might not keep their word, the traditional conviction that safety could only be found in superior strength. *^c Of a real desire to achieve disarmament for its own sake," declares General Temperley, the British Military Adviser, " I could see no sign anywhere, because they were afraid." It was natural enough, though none the less fatal to success, that the victorious Powers, with France and Great Britain at their head, should desire to retain their superiority. It was equally natural that the defeated